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Title: ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY AND FACTORS THAT IMPACT MANURE MANAGEMENT ON WISCONSIN DAIRY FARMS)

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Interpretive Summary:

Technical Abstract: Current environmental regulations related to manure management are generally based on the number of livestock per farm, or a farm's position in a watershed. Such approaches often do not consider biophysical factors, such as soils and weather, and socio-economic conditions that affect farmer management of manure. This presentation of various studies of representative Wisconsin dairy farms showed that policies based on farm size may not provide the desired outcome of improved manure management. For example, farms with small herd size collect less manure than large farms. Also, although most Wisconsin dairy farms operate sufficient cropland area for recycling manure, farmers use only a fraction of their cropland base to spread manure. Farmers in the northeast part of the state spread manure on 23% of their total cropland base verses 44% in the southwest region. Regional differences in soils and weather affect the number of days a farmer can spread or inject manure, and till the soil. Biophysical and socioeconomic conditions that affect farmers' ability to collect and spread manure should be considered when formulating manure management policy aimed at improving the environmental performance of Wisconsin dairy farms.

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